DOI:
10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.04.019

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Institutional Bindingness, Power Structure, and Land Expropriation in China

Meina Cai
Department of Political Science
University of Connecticut
365 Fairfield Way, Unit 1024
Storrs, CT 06269-1024, USA
E-mail:meina.cai@uconn.edu
Phone: +1-860-486-3352

Xin Sun*
Lau China Institute
King's College London
Strand
London, WC2R 2LS, UK
E-mail: xin.sun@kcl.ac.uk
Phone: +44-749-057-4728

* Corresponding author. Authors are ordered alphabetically. The corresponding author developed the research idea and conducted the empirical analysis; both authors contributed equally to the rest of the work.

Institutional Bindingness, Power Structure, and Land Expropriation in China

1. Introduction

Many contemporary authoritarian regimes hold seemingly democratic institutions ("quasi-democratic institutions" henceforth), including political parties, legislatures, and competitive elections (Levitsky and Way, 2010; Gandhi, 2008). Some scholars find that quasi-democratic institutions — besides preserving authoritarian rule — generate positive governance outcomes, such as more secure property rights and better public goods and social welfare provision (e.g., Gandhi, 2008; Gehlbach and Keefer, 2011). This line of research typically treats quasi-democratic institutions as exogenously determined and presumes that such institutions, once established, are "binding" in the sense that they empower non-state actors and constrain the discretionary behavior of authoritarian ruling elites. However, recent studies suggest that quasi-democratic institutions are not necessarily binding and their bindingness varies across different contexts (Jensen et al., 2014; Wright, 2008). How does institutional bindingness affect governance outcomes in authoritarian regimes? Moreover, if institutional bindingness indeed has governance implications, why does the bindingness of the same institution vary across contexts?

These questions are particularly relevant in China, where some quasi-democratic institutions and practices have been implemented at the local level while the regime remains under solid authoritarian rule by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Chinese villages have adopted competitive direct elections for over three decades, but the exercise of power by Villagers' Committees (VCs) — the elected village leadership — is still constrained by the presence of the village Party branch, the CCP's grassroots organization. This leads to a "dual power structure" whereby village governing power is divided between VCs and Party branches (Oi and Rozelle, 2000; Guo and Bernstein, 2004). In the absence of clearly-demarcated domains of authority between them, these two types of village leaders often engage in power struggles against each other. The uncertainty over the locus of power casts doubt on the ability of elections to empower villagers and constrain intervention by local states, particularly by governments at the county and township levels,

into village affairs. As a result, depending on the post-election balance of power between VCs and village Party branches, even free and fair elections are not necessarily binding.

This article examines the institutional bindingness of village elections — operationalized in terms of the post-election balance of power between VCs and Party branches — in the context of land expropriation. For the majority of rural residents, land is the most important asset because it functions both as a source of income and as a mechanism of social insurance (Cai, 2016). Over the last two decades, China experienced massive state-led urbanization, causing over 40 million farmers to be deprived of land and forced to relocate (Han, 2005). Land expropriation, central to the government's strategies of development and capital accumulation, has generated widespread discontent and become the most important source of social conflict in rural and peri-urban areas (Cui et al., 2015; Sargeson, 2013). Bargaining and conflicts over compensation for expropriation between land-losing villagers and the local government provide an ideal analytical perspective to examine how the balance of power between the two types of village leadership affects governance outcomes.[1]

Following the work of Sun et al. (2013), we adopt a principal-agent framework to treat leaders of VCs and Party branches as agents of villagers and the local state, respectively. Against the backdrop of contestation between VCs and Party branches, we argue that VC leaders are more likely to take the side of villagers' against local officials in the process of land expropriation. Land-losing villagers are thus better off when elected VCs hold substantial authority in village politics. We further contend that the balance of power between VCs and Party branches is not exogenously determined; rather, it is shaped by political bargaining between local governments and ordinary villagers. The outcomes of these political agreements depend on the relative bargaining power of the two sides.

Using survey data, our empirical analysis finds that in villages where VCs are the dominant leader or share power equally with Party branches, villagers' interests are better represented, negotiations with the local government on land-taking compensation are more likely to take place, and villagers are more satisfied with the compensation they received for land expropriation. We also show that the balance of power between VCs

and Party branches is partly determined by the fiscal and political capacity of the local government vis-à-vis the villagers. When a village is fiscally more dependent on the local government, the Party branch is more likely to hold stronger authority. In contrast, when villagers can impose credible threats on local states through collective action, especially in the presence of large-scale land expropriations, VCs are more likely to obtain an advantage over Party branches.

These findings suggest that when investigating quasi-democratic institutions in authoritarian regimes, it is insufficient to focus only on the presence or procedures of institutions. Institutional bindingness deserves careful research attention. Moreover, institutional bindingness is not exogenously determined — it depends on the political context and particularly the political bargaining between regime elites and social actors. When acting collectively, ordinary citizens who typically do not enjoy strong *de jure* political power could affect the outcomes of such bargaining and push quasi-democratic institutions to benefit their interests.

This research makes an important contribution to the literature on how local democratic institutions affect governance performance in developing countries. Empirical evidence based on democratic countries has shown positive associations between local democratic institutions and governance outcomes (e.g., Besley and Burgess, 2002; Olken, 2010). Studies on village elections in China have similarly argued that these elections promote better public goods provision and reduce corruption and inequality (Zhang et al., 2004; Luo et al., 2007; Martinez-Bravo et al., 2011; Wang and Yao, 2007; Shen and Yao, 2008; Brandt and Turner, 2007). This research suggests that the governance effects of local democratic institutions in authoritarian contexts are contingent on institutional bindingness, which is subject to political bargaining between regime elites and social actors. Uncertainty in terms of institutional bindingness may significantly shape how local democratic institutions function in authoritarian regimes and potentially undermine their benefits.

Our research also contributes to the burgeoning literature on the politics of land and urbanization in China. The dominant research paradigm in this literature theorizes land

disputes as politicized bargains between local governments and land-losing citizens (Hsing, 2010; Whiting, 2011; Rithmire, 2015). While scholars have long noted the important intermediary roles village leaders play in such bargains, few studies have explicitly tested how village politics affects the process and outcome of land expropriation.[2] By showing that the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches significantly shapes land bargaining outcomes, this study advances our understanding of the politics of land-related disputes and conflict in China.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on quasi-democratic institutions under authoritarianism with a focus on institutional bindingness. Section 3 contextualizes the concept of institutional bindingness by introducing the "dual power structure" in rural China. Section 4 theorizes how the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches affects the process and outcome of land expropriation and how it is endogenously determined by the bargaining power between local state and villagers. Section 5 provides empirical evidence using survey data. Section 6 concludes.

2. Institutional bindingness under authoritarianism

It is common for contemporary authoritarian regimes to hold some forms of quasi-democratic institutions, such as political parties, legislatures, and elections. Existing research argues that, rather than promoting transitions to democracy, quasi-democratic institutions serve important functions for autocrats to stay in power. These functions include co-opting political elites or opposition groups in the society (Magaloni, 2006; Gandhi, 2008; Wright, 2008; Blaydes, 2010; Boix and Svolik, 2013), signaling regime strength and popularity (Magaloni, 2006; Simpser, 2013), attracting private investment (Wright, 2008; Gehlbach and Keefer, 2011), and conveying information about the challenges facing autocrats (Malesky and Schuler, 2010; Manion, 2016). Scholars introduced new concepts such as "pseudo-democracy" (Diamond et al., 1995: 8), "disguised dictatorship" (Brooker, 2014: 228), "hegemonic electoral authoritarianism" and "competitive authoritarianism" (Diamond, 2002: 29-32; Levitsky and Way, 2002: 53) to capture these new forms of authoritarian rule.

Besides serving the interests of authoritarian rulers, quasi-democratic institutions could also improve governance outcomes and citizens' well-being. Scholars have identified two mechanisms for such effects. First, by incorporating more actors into political and policymaking processes, quasi-democratic institutions are able to constrain state predation, enhance the responsiveness and accountability of office-holders, and produce policies that benefit a broader population (Boix, 2003; Gandhi, 2008; Malesky and Schuler, 2010; Manion, 2014; Harding, 2015; Rosenzweig, 2015). Second, quasi-democratic institutions also act as the platforms on which ruling regime elites establish patronage ties with citizens. Through these institutions, authoritarian regimes expand particularistic benefits beyond the narrow circle of ruling elites to at least part of the society (Lust-Okar, 2005; Magaloni, 2006; Blaydes, 2010).

This body of research commonly presumes that quasi-democratic institutions, to some extent, empower non-state actors and hold the behaviors of ruling regime elites in check. In other words, institutions are presumed to be "binding," implying that they credibly transfer limited but real political power from elites to other social groups that are originally excluded from political processes. For example, the co-optation theory argues that authoritarian rulers – especially in countries with scarce natural resources – need the cooperation of social and business groups to promote economic growth and maintain regime stability. Elections and legislatures whereby these groups are entitled to a formal say in the policymaking process are capable of promoting such cooperation (Gandhi and Przeworski, 2007). The formal political and policy influence attached to legislative seats is central to this logic, because without meaningful power these elected positions and legislative seats would degenerate into merely rent-seeking opportunities (Blaydes, 2010).

However, the above presumption — institutions are binding — deserves further scrutiny. Scholars have shown that elections and legislatures are incapable of effectively constraining the dictatorial power of authoritarian ruling elites in many contexts (e.g., Wright, 2008). Authoritarian regimes can establish reserved domains and restrictions to obstruct elected officials and legislators from exercising meaningful power, often through extra-constitutional means. For example, elected legislatures in Egypt under Mubarak were

highly circumscribed and lacked independent policymaking power; as a result, they were incapable of compelling the state to make policy compromises to citizens (Blaydes, 2010). Similarly, Jensen et al. (2014) found that multi-party legislatures only reduce the risk of property expropriation by corporate insiders but not by the state, indicating the limited role that legislatures play in constraining the state. In military regimes, the power of elected officials are often heavily circumscribed under so-called "guided democracy," whereas the real power is concentrated in a few military commanders instead of an elected civilian leadership (Collier and Levitsky, 1997).

The limited existing discussion on the bindingness issue of quasi-democratic institutions shows that the degree of bindingness depends on regime types. Wright and coauthors (2008; 2017) argue that legislatures are more likely to be binding in single-party and military regimes than personalist regimes and monarchies and in resource-poor than resource-rich countries. However, this approach has two major shortcomings. First, it overlooks potential and nuanced differences among regimes of the same type. For example, People's Congresses in China — a country that, following Wright's logic, falls into the categories of resource-poor and single-party rule — are not binding legislatures because they have been long regarded as powerless "rubber stamps." Despite being more assertive, national and local People's congresses still primarily serve as a channel for the regime to collect information about society rather than a platform for non-state actors to challenge the decisions of the state (Manion, 2016; Truex, 2016). Second, institutional bindingness may also vary at the subnational level, which cannot be captured by cross-national analysis.

3. Bindingness of village elections in China

This section considers the bindingness of village elections — a quasi-democratic practice widely adopted in China but its actual significance in village politics exhibits significant subnational variation. As defined earlier, bindingness refers to the extent to which institutions empower non-state actors and constrain the discretionary behavior of authoritarian ruling elites. In the context of Chinese villages, we operationalize bindingness in terms of

the balance of power between elected Villagers' Committees and village Party branches. More specifically, we view village elections as binding if and only if elected VC leaders are able to hold substantial power rather than simply being subordinate to the authorities of Party branches and the local government. The bindingness of village elections varies significantly across localities.

Village elections were first introduced in the early 1980s when the People's Commune governance system became dysfunctional or paralyzed as a result of agricultural de-collectivization.[3] Villagers' Committees were written into China's Constitution as elected mass organizations of self-government (Article 111) in 1982. The rules and regulations of village elections are governed by the Organic Law of Villagers' Committees, which was implemented on a trial basis in 1987, fully adopted in 1998, and further amended in 2010. According to the Organic Law, the Villagers' Committee, usually consisting of three to seven members, is directly elected by villagers every three years.

The existing literature argues that elections have positive effects on various aspects of village governance. Survey research shows that elections are able to strengthen the accountability of village officials (Manion, 1996; Kennedy et al., 2004), reduce their predatory and rent-seeking behavior (Brandt and Turner, 2007), prompt them to side with ordinary villagers in resisting unpopular state policies (Li, 2001), and boost public confidence in their trustworthiness and integrity (Manion, 2006). Scholars also find that elections increase expenditure on public goods and services (Zhang et al., 2004; Luo et al., 2007; Martinez-Bravo et al., 2011; Wang and Yao, 2007) and reduce income inequality (Shen and Yao, 2008).

While village elections have to some extent weakened the direct control of the party-state over village affairs, it would be wrong to assume that elected VCs have become the sole or even primary locus of power within villages. In particular, Party branches, which are not subject to popular elections, remain strongly influential in village governance. The co-existence of VCs and Party branches as two separate loci of power leads to what scholars have called "dual-power structure" (Oi and Rozelle, 2000; Guo and Bernstein, 2004). China's laws, including the Organic Law, are ambiguous about the roles and re-

sponsibilities of Party branches and VCs in village affairs. According to the Organic Law, for example, VCs are in charge of "public affairs and public goods of the village" and "the management of land and other collective property" (Articles 2 and 8). Party branches should "support villagers in developing self-governance and exercising their democratic rights;" however, they also "serve a leadership core (*lingdao hexin*) role in village governance" (Article 4). Such ambiguity and contradictions also exist extensively in the regulations issued by subnational governments (see Alpermann, 2009).

In practice, the balance of power between Party branches and VCs varies enormously across villages. Li (1999) found in a survey of 10,041 respondents in seven provinces in 1997 that 13% of the respondents believed that the ultimate authority in village affairs rested with the village head, while 55% thought it was on the Party secretary. Among 115 villages surveyed in 2004, Sun et al. (2013) found that 50% of the villages had Party branches that wielded the ultimate authority and 32% had VCs with this authority either solely or shared with the Party branch. An another 18% of villages adopted a practice known as concurrent office holding (*yijiantiao*) where a single individual is selected to head both the VC and the Party branch.[4] These findings demonstrate that in many villages VCs still have not been able to challenge the dominant position of Party branches in village affairs.

Scholars of Chinese politics have indeed noted that village elections, even implemented with high-quality procedures, are not necessarily binding. A special issue of *Journal of Contemporary China* (2009, Vol. 18, Issue 60) on village elections in China emphasizes the fact that focusing on the presence of elections or the quality of electoral procedures is insufficient. The contributors of this special issue recommended a new research agenda that places elections within a broader political context of the local power structure. In the special issue, O'Brien and Han (2009) argue that village elections have changed the way in which village leaders gain power, but access to power does not necessarily lead to effective exercise of power, drawing scholarly attention to the post-election balance of power between VCs and village Party branches. Manion (2009) similarly encourages an effort to "push forward with a new wave of scholarship on village democratization, one

that systematically investigates the contextual effect of the local power configuration on governance" (p.382).

Extending this new research agenda, we seek to examine how the post-election balance of power between VCs and village Party branches affects village governance, and how the structure is shaped by interactions between local states and ordinary villagers. It should be pointed out that we do not and have no intention to deny the importance of elections; in fact, we believe holding regular and competitive elections is essential to improve village governance. However, we demonstrate that this effect is conditional upon the extent to which elected village leaders hold sufficiently meaningful power to constrain the behavior of local party-state and its agents.

4. Balance of power and land expropriation in China

We analyze the impact of the balance of power between VCs and Party branches on village governance outcomes in the context of land expropriation. Land expropriation arises from the unique property rights arrangement in rural China where land cultivated by individual households is owned by village collectives.[5] Collective land ownership features what Peter Ho (2001) calls "deliberate institutional ambiguity" — the term "collective" is intentionally vague in the Land Administration Law (LAL) in order to solidify state control over rural land. Moreover, LAL gives the state the right to expropriate collective land for "public use," the scope of which is also poorly defined. This institutional ambiguity by design leaves significant room for the abuse of power by governments at various levels to expropriate rural land and convert it into non-agricultural use, such as industrial and infrastructure projects as well as lucrative real-estate development. What's worse, the government typically compensates land-losing farmers on the basis of their land's original use (i.e., agriculture or rural housing), but subsequently auctions off the expropriated land at the market price based on its future value. As a result, massive profits go to the coffers of the government. The scale of land expropriation is massive. It is estimated that land expropriation accounts for the loss of around 200 thousand hectares of farmland and the relocation of more than three million rural residents every

year (Han, 2005). Inadequate compensation, forced eviction, and land-related corruption are rampant throughout China, escalating conflict between land-losing farmers and local governments (Ong, 2014). Consequently, land disputes have become the primary source of social unrest (Yu, 2009).[6]

While land expropriations are by and large state behavior — they are decided by governments at or above the county level and implemented by local officials at county or township levels — their outcomes, to some extent, depend on the attitudes and behaviors of village leaders, particularly VC Chairs and village Party secretaries. Village leaders play multiple roles in the process of land expropriation. For example, local officials rely on them to convene village assemblies and/or public hearings, to announce government decisions and compensation standards, and to persuade villagers to give up their land. When negotiations occur between local governments and villagers, village leaders are also key participants. They also carry out some detailed work such as land surveying and valuation. Moreover, in many cases, village leaders also play a key role in deciding the use and allocation of the part of the compensation paid to village collectives. All these roles allow village leaders to exert direct or indirect influence over the amount of compensation individual villagers could obtain (Fu, 2014).

There is considerable variation in the attitudes and behavior adopted by village leaders when expropriating land. Some leaders dutifully implement upper-level government directives regardless of the interests or preferences of villagers (Cai, 2003). They withhold important information, urge villagers to accept low compensation, and prevent villagers from mobilizing collectively by leveraging their formal and informal influence within village, sometimes in the form of coercion (Sargeson, 2013; Mattingly, 2016). By contrast, leaders in other villages help negotiate with the local officials for higher compensation on behalf of villagers. They even take leadership roles in collective action (e.g., petition and protest) against land expropriation.[7]

We argue that the role of village leaders in land expropriation depends critically on the balance of power between VCs and Party branches. Following the work of Sun et al. (2013), we adopt a principal-agent framework to treat leaders of VCs and Party

branches as the agent of villagers and the local state, respectively. These two types of village leaders derive authority from different sources. As discussed earlier, VC leaders are popularly elected while Party branch leaders are either appointed by the township Party committee or selected by the other village Party members through a vote. Even when voting by party members is required, there are various channels by which township authorities can exert an undue influence on the ultimate result (e.g., by controlling the candidate nomination process). More importantly, village Party branches, as part of the centralized Party hierarchy, are obliged to carry out orders from above, regardless of how their leaders are selected.[8]

Various sources of authority between VCs and Party branches strongly shape the willingness of village leaders to defend the interests of villagers in land expropriation. Land expropriation is essentially a zero-sum game: the more land-taking compensation villagers receive, the less revenue local governments can retain. When the conflict of interest occurs between villagers and local governments, village Party secretaries, who rely more on the political support of the local government to retain their leadership positions and authority, are more likely to favor the interest of the local government by seeking to persuade, or even force, villagers to accept the state-set compensation and give up their land. In contrast, VC leaders rely more on the popular support of their constituencies — village voters. Therefore, they are more likely to protect the interest of their village in the process of land expropriation. This is primarily done by helping villagers negotiate with the local government for better compensation packages. As discussed earlier, holding even free and fair elections does not necessarily mean that elected leaders enjoy real power in the post-election dual-power structure. As a result, VC leaders are more likely to shape land expropriation outcomes when they hold meaningful power vis-à-vis Party branch leaders. We therefore expect that:

> **Hypothesis 1:** *In villages where VCs hold substantial power, village leaders are more likely to represent the interest of villagers during land expropriation, and land-losing villagers are more likely to receive better compensation and resettlement deals.*

The above hypothesis suggests that the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches plays a key role in shaping the process and outcomes of land expropriation. It is then straightforward to probe how the balance of power varies across villages. In other words, if the configuration of power within the village leadership is an important determinant of governance outcomes, why does such power vary in the first place?

The principal-agent framework we adopt also sheds light on the sources of variation in the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches. Such balance of power, we argue, is partially driven by the political bargaining between their respective principals, namely local state authorities and ordinary villagers. On the one hand, to ensure implementation of state policies from above — especially those unpopular mandates such as birth control and land expropriation, township governments rely heavily on village Party branches and have strong incentives to strengthen the latter's authority in villages. One instrument that township governments could draw upon is the allocation of government funds. The abolition of the centuries-old agricultural tax in the early 2000s significantly reduced village income, making many villages financially dependent on the township government. This is especially true for poor villages, which have fewer sources to generate income and have to rely on township governments to pay for public goods and services as well as the salaries of village cadres. As one VC chair explained in an interview, "*When he [the Party secretary] went to the township government with requests, he was always treated well. If I were to go, they would just ignore me.*"[9] The dependence of villages on fiscal resources controlled by the local government therefore strengthens the prestige and authority of Party secretaries as opposed to VCs.

On the other hand, villagers are strongly motivated to strengthen the authority of VCs, who they trust more, especially when large-scale land expropriations cause serious damage to their interests and thereby increase their political activism (Sargeson, 2016). Through collective actions, sometimes under the leadership and support of elected village leaders, villagers are able to impose credible threats on local officials (Wang, 2012). The most common form of collective action by land-losing villagers is what O'Brien and Li (2006) have called "rightful resistance," by which villagers organize petitions to upper-

level governments and use state laws and policies to legitimize their resistance against the illegal behavior of local governments. Local officials are evaluated by the Party based on their governance performance in various aspects, one of which relates to maintaining social stability. Failure to fulfill the mandate of maintaining stability could have detrimental consequences for the career prospects of local officials. As a result, resistance by villagers has potential to trigger career-concerned government officials to make a policy compromise and in some situation lead to a broader policy change through which to address grievances from below (Heurlin, 2016). Moreover, in the presence of large-scale land expropriations, local officials who are concerned about social stability are less likely to act blatantly in favor of Party branches.

The extent to which local governments and Party branches make concessions also depends on the ability of villagers to mobilize more participants. Large-scale collective action impose greater pressure on local officials, thereby making concessions more likely. Also, the prestige of village Party secretaries who act as arms of the township government becomes weakened in the midst of popular resistance, providing politically savvy VC leaders with an opportunity to compel Party secretaries to share power (Sun et al., 2013). In short, we expect the political bargaining between local governments and villagers to affect the balance of power between VCs and Party branches in the following ways:

> **Hypothesis 2a:** *The fiscal control of local governments over villages empowers Party branches vis-à-vis VCs in the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches.*

> **Hypothesis 2b:** *Large-scale land expropriations empower VCs vis-à-vis Party branches in the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches.*

> **Hypothesis 2c:** *Large-scale collective petitions empower VCs vis-à-vis Party branches in the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches.*

5. Empirical analysis

Our data consists of two recent surveys, conducted by the same research team in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The 2009 survey was a household survey that randomly selected farmers from 62 villages in the peri-urban areas of 12 cities, allowing us to test the first hypothesis. However, the survey fails to generate the village aggregates that are necessary to test the second set of hypotheses. In response, our analysis relies on the 2008 survey within which village-level data was collected from 120 villages in six provinces. A more detailed description about the two surveys can be found in Appendix A.

(a) *Impact of post-election balance of power on land expropriation*

We used the 2009 survey to examine how the post-election balance of power between VCs and Party branches affects the process and outcomes of land expropriation. The main dependent variables are constructed based on land-losing villagers' self-reported attitudinal responses to the following survey questions. First, "how much do you agree that village leaders stood for the interest of villagers in land expropriation?" Second, "how satisfied were you with the compensation and settlement arrangements that your household received in land expropriation?" Responses to both questions were measured on a five-level scale with higher values indicating more satisfaction.

We also construct another dependent variable — whether negotiations about compensation occurred between villagers and the local government, which captures whether the process of land expropriation is favorable to the benefits of villagers. In land expropriations, local officials and villagers often negotiate about compensation, and such negotiations could take place either collectively between local officials and a group of village representatives or individually between officials and individual households. Wang (2013) found that land-losing villagers received better compensation when such negotiations occurred. Our fieldwork in Yueqing, Wenzhou in eastern China suggests that VC leaders often play a key role in the negotiation process and are more likely than Party secretaries to take the side of villagers. They could, for example, formulate bargaining strategies based on the information and experience they had accumulated through previ-

ous engagement with the local government. They could also coordinate collective action among villagers to exert pressure on the local government.[10] We expect that negotiations about compensation are more likely to occur when VC rather than Party branch leaders hold substantial power. To capture negotiations, we construct a variable based on the survey question, "Was there a negotiation on land-taking compensation with the local government when your land was expropriated?" Individual responses were coded dichotomously. Table 1 provides a snapshot of the dependent variables aggregated to the city level, suggesting significant variation in all three measures across cities.

Table 1: Description of main dependent variables by cities

City	Number of Respondents	Number of Land-losing Households	Satisfaction[1]	Interest[2]	Negotiation[3]
Wenzhou	81	59	2.17	2.74	56%
Ningbo	102	90	2.73	3.18	7%
Wuxi	101	76	3.28	3.89	27%
Sanhe	108	53	3.34	3.51	57%
Weifang	109	58	4.48	4.40	66%
Jinan	102	95	3.41	3.68	42%
Guangzhou	104	33	2.55	3.30	48%
Zhongshan	86	26	3.15	3.63	53%
Dongguan	90	35	2.71	3.59	21%
Chongqing	106	61	2.80	3.24	37%
Nanchong	108	98	3.23	3.62	46%
Chengdu	111	108	3.39	3.84	79%

Source: 2009 survey.
Note: [1] Satisfaction measured using the question, "How satisfied were you with the compensation and settlement arrangements that your household received in land expropriation?" Answers measured on a five-level scale (5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=neutral; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree).
[2] Interest measured using the question, "How much do you agree that village leaders stood for the interest of villagers in land expropriation?" Answers measured on a five-level scale (5=very satisfied; 4=satisfied; 3=neutral; 2=dissatisfied; 1=very dissatisfied).
[3] Negotiation measured using the question, "Was there a negotiation on land-taking compensation with the local government when your land was expropriated?" Answers coded dichotomously (1=yes). Percentage represents the proportion of respondents in each city who reported that negotiations occurred.

It should be noted that not all villagers who participated in the survey experienced land expropriation. We dropped those who had never experienced land acquisition in our analysis. For those villagers who experienced expropriation more than once, we focus

on the one that, based on respondents' own judgment, had the largest impact on their household.

Our main independent variable of theoretical interest, the configuration of power between Party branches and VCs, is measured using the survey question, "Who is/was in charge of public affairs in your village?" Both VC and Party branch leaders face a three-year term limit. The question was asked twice: once for the leader currently in office when the survey was conducted, and the other for the leader in the previous term. Survey respondents were asked to choose from the following three options, 1= Party branch assumes the dominant leadership role (including those serving concurrently as Party secretary and village head, i.e., *yijiantiao*);[11] 2=VC assumes the dominant leadership role; and 3=Party branch and VC share the leadership responsibilities.[12]

We construct two measures for the balance of power between VCs and party branches. While the survey was conducted at the individual household level, the balance of power occurs at the village level and therefore requires the data to be aggregated at the village level. We formulated two aggregates, one continuous and one binary, using information reported by all villagers in the survey rather than just land-losing villagers. The continuous aggregate (Measure 1) uses the proportion of respondents who reported VC assuming the leadership role either solely or shared with Party branches in a village (i.e., combining those who answered 2 and 3).[13] The binary aggregate (Measure 2) uses the plurality rule in the process of data aggregation. For example, if in a village 57% of survey respondents reported that their VC is in charge of village affairs either alone or shared with the Party branch, Measure 1 of village power balance will be coded as .57 and Measure 2 will be coded as 1. Table 2 provides summary statistics for the two measures further aggregated at the city level, suggesting considerable regional variation. For example, in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, land-losing farmers in all of the villages surveyed reported VCs were in charge of village affairs, whereas VCs in Jinan, Shandong province were only in charge in one of the five villages surveyed.

Our control variables include the size of the respondent's household, whether his or her family belongs to a major clan of the village, whether his or her family member is a

Table 2: Balance of power aggregated by city

City	Number of villages selected into each city	Balance of power			
		Measure 1[1]		Measure 2[2]	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Wenzhou	5	0.95	0.07	1.00	0.00
Ningbo	5	0.33	0.19	0.20	0.45
Wuxi	5	0.49	0.20	0.40	0.55
Sanhe	5	0.45	0.18	0.40	0.55
Weifang	5	0.55	0.12	0.60	0.55
Jinan	5	0.36	0.18	0.20	0.48
Guangzhou	6	0.63	0.18	0.50	0.55
Zhongshan	6	0.73	0.18	0.83	0.41
Dongguan	5	0.84	0.03	1.00	0.00
Chongqing	5	0.65	0.20	0.60	0.55
Nanchong	5	0.63	0.14	0.60	0.55
Chengdu	5	0.54	0.15	0.40	0.55

Source: 2009 survey.
Note: [1] Measure 1 is a continuous measure that ranges from 0 to 1.
[2] Measure 2 is a dichotomous measure. More details about the variable construction are available in Appendix D.

village cadre or a Party member, whether his or her family member has a non-farming job, size of the expropriated land,[14] year of land expropriation, and whether house demolition was involved in land expropriation. Table 3 provides summary statistics.

Table 3: Summary statistics of control variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Cadre	432	0.07	0.25	0	1
Party membership	432	0.31	0.46	0	1
Major clan	432	0.35	0.48	0	1
Household size	432	3.84	1.42	1	8
Non-agricultural employment	432	0.59	0.49	0	1
Size of expropriated land ($\geq 2mu$[1])	432	0.34	0.48	0	1
Demolition	432	0.65	0.48	0	1

Note: [1] *Mu* is a Chinese unit of measurement, with 1 mu=1/15 hectares.
Source: The 2009 survey.

Table 4 reports the regression results. The coefficients for the balance of power between VCs and Party branches are positive and statistically significant across all regressions, consistent with the first hypothesis. More specifically, in villages where VCs hold a primary leadership role either solely or shared with Party branches, villagers are more

likely to perceive village leaders standing for their interest during land expropriation and more satisfied with the land-taking compensation. Moreover, negotiations with the state for more land-taking compensation are more likely to take place. On average, shifting from Party branch dominance to VC dominance or equal power-sharing is associated with an increase in the belief that village cadres represent the interest of villagers during land expropriation by 0.21-1.27. The same shift is also associated with an increase in the level of individual satisfaction by 0.47-1.59, depending on how the balance of power is measured. We vary model specifications by using ordered logit and hierarchical models and perform bivariate analysis by excluding all controls. The main results remain robust. The results are reported in Appendix B.

There may exist some confounding variable (e.g., local governance policies) that explains both the balance of power and better land expropriation outcomes for villagers, raising concerns about endogeneity. Our strategy is to adopt an instrumental-variable approach by taking advantage of the local policy context of China where provincial- or city-level regulations impact the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches of all villages within the same city. More specifically, we use the average score of the balance of power of all sample villages within the same city as a proxy for the regulatory environment of the city regarding the village balance of power. We provide a more detailed description of how the instrumental variable is constructed and report the regression results in Appendix C. Overall, the main results remain hold, demonstrating the robustness of our findings.

Among the control variables, villagers are more satisfied with land-taking compensation when the size of the expropriated land is smaller. However, demolition of houses increase villagers' satisfaction with the compensation. This is because while the expropriation of farmland only requires the approval of village assemblies or village representatives, demolishing houses requires signing contracts with individual households. This requirement provides additional bargaining power to villagers. Belonging to a major clan of the village is positively associated with villagers' satisfaction with compensation, suggesting that lineage groups have an influence on the distribution of compensation. This

Table 4: Explaining the process and outcome of land expropriation

	Satisfaction		Interest		Negotiation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	Logit	Logit
Balance of power (Measure 1)	1.594***		1.267**		0.522**	
	(0.551)		(0.519)		(0.266)	
Balance of power (Measure 2)		0.465***		0.208*		0.119*
		(0.138)		(0.122)		(0.068)
Cadre	0.151	0.164	0.234	0.249	0.182	0.190
	(0.222)	(0.219)	(0.173)	(0.177)	(0.119)	(0.120)
Party membership	0.048	0.037	0.004	-0.014	0.063	0.058
	(0.124)	(0.124)	(0.122)	(0.123)	(0.063)	(0.063)
Major clan	0.281**	0.290**	0.039	0.053	0.048	0.052
	(0.133)	(0.132)	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Household size	-0.056	-0.057	0.033	0.034	0.017	0.016
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Non-agricultural employment	0.194	0.183	0.152	0.151	-0.019	-0.019
	(0.140)	(0.140)	(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Size of expropriated land	-0.339***	-0.335**	-0.010	-0.023	-0.068	-0.068
	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.124)	(0.127)	(0.063)	(0.063)
Demolition	0.458**	0.521***	0.129	0.187	0.229***	0.252***
	(0.177)	(0.175)	(0.190)	(0.189)	(0.082)	(0.082)
2006	-0.019	-0.024	-0.159	-0.162	0.105	0.102
	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.169)	(0.170)	(0.085)	(0.085)
2007	-0.119	-0.198	-0.004	-0.051	-0.072	-0.093
	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.182)	(0.183)	(0.091)	(0.091)
2008	-0.120	-0.082	-0.213	-0.176	0.083	0.098
	(0.185)	(0.185)	(0.161)	(0.161)	(0.093)	(0.092)
Constant	1.084	2.257***	2.007***	3.084***		
	(0.697)	(0.438)	(0.665)	(0.442)		
R-squared	0.267	0.271	0.187	0.179		
N	421	421	394	394	432	432
City fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: 2009 survey.
Note: Marginal effects are reported for logit regressions; robust standard errors are in parentheses for OLS regressions; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

confirms the observation by Mattingly (2016) that informal institutions within villages play a strong role in the process of land expropriation.

(b) *Political bargaining and balance of power*

We further argue that the balance of power between VCs and Party branches is endogenously determined by political bargaining between ordinary villagers and local state authorities. In the context of land expropriation, the outcomes of such bargains depend

on the fiscal dependence of villages on the township government (Hypothesis 2a), the scale of land expropriations (Hypothesis 2b), and the scale of villagers' collective petitions (Hypothesis 2c). To test these hypotheses, we use the 2008 survey. Unlike the 2009 household survey, the 2008 survey sampled more villages (i.e., 120 villages in 2008 vs. 62 in 2009) and collected richer village-level information. Moreover, while the 2009 survey only sampled villages that had experienced land expropriation, the 2008 survey selected villages both with and without land expropriations into the sample, providing more explanatory power. We provide a detailed description of the 2008 survey in Appendix A.

The dependent variable — how power is divided between VCs and Party branches — is measured using the survey question, "Who assumes the primary leadership role in village financial affairs in your village?" This question was answered collectively by a group of (usually three) "elite villagers," which often included village electoral committee members, candidates in the most recent elections, or other villagers who were active participants of village affairs. Respondents were asked to choose from the following options: 1= Party branch secretary assumes the dominant leadership role; 2= VC chair assumes the dominant leadership role; 3= VC chair and Party branch secretary share leadership responsibilities (power-sharing); 4= Concurrent office-holding. We combine VC dominance and power-sharing between VCs and Party branches (i.e., answers 2 and 3) into one single category. Among sample villages, 26% were governed under Party branch dominance, 47% under VC dominance or power-sharing, and the rest 27% under concurrent office-holding. For now, we leave Party branch dominance and concurrent office-holding as separate categories, but as illustrated in the results below, these two categories demonstrate similar patterns and combining them into a single category does not affect our analysis.

We use three main independent variables to test the three hypotheses respectively. The fiscal dependence of villages on the township government is measured by the share of government subsidies in village fiscal expenditure in the last year. To measure the scale of land expropriations, we created two dummy variables, whether the aggregated amount of

land acquired in the village within the past three years exceeded 50 or 100 *mu*. Both fiscal dependence and the scale of land expropriations, along with other village socioeconomic information, are based on interviews conducted with village leaders. To measure the scale of collective petitions, we created another two dummy variables, whether villagers organized collective petitions with more than 50 or 100 participants in the past three years. The information on collective petitions was collected based on individual reports and aggregated at the village level.

We also include a set of control variables. First, we control for the quality of electoral procedures because VC leaders who go through freer and fairer elections presumably enjoy greater prestige and thus stronger political support among villagers. Therefore, elections that adopt procedures with higher quality could strengthen the authority of VC leaders vis-á-vis Party secretaries. We create an index for the quality of elections by adding up four indicators of election procedures: whether the nomination procedure adopts a method that permitted individual voters to receive a blank ballot and nominate whomever they wanted — a method often called "open sea nomination" (*haixuan timing*) (Pastor and Tan, 2000); whether roving ballot boxes are banned; whether the secret ballot is adopted; and whether the proxy voting is banned. The index ranges from 0 to 4. Second, we also control for several village socioeconomic characteristics, including income per capita, the size of population, the share of migrant workers who work outside the village among village labor force,[15] and the strength of lineage groups measured by the presence of ancestral halls.[16] Table 5 provides summary statistics.

Given that the dependent variable is a categorical variable taking on three values, we use multinomial logistic regressions in which VC dominance or power-sharing is set as the baseline category. In other words, we seek to examine how the main independent variables affect the likelihood of Party branch dominance and concurrent office-holding. Table 6 reports the results. The coefficients for fiscal dependence are positive and statistically significant across all model specifications, suggesting that when villages are more fiscally dependent on the local government, Party branches are more likely to play a primary leadership role. That is, fiscal subsidies provide local authorities with an instrument to

Table 5: Summary statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Configruation of power	118	2.01	0.73	1	3
Size of expropriated land (≥ 50 *mu*)	118	0.15	0.36	0	1
Size of expropriated land (≥ 100 *mu*)	118	0.11	0.31	0	1
Collective petition (≥ 50 participants)	118	0.23	0.42	0	1
Collective petition (≥ 100 participants)	118	0.14	0.35	0	1
Fiscal dependence	118	0.52	0.37	0	1
Quality of elections	118	1.35	1.12	0	4
Income per capita (log)	118	8.10	0.64	5.30	9.47
Population (log)	118	7.18	0.65	5.08	8.53
Share of migrant workers	118	0.23	0.12	0	0.59
Ancestry hall	118	0.18	0.40	0	1

Source: 2008 survey.

exercise influence on the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches. This is consistent with Hypothesis 2a. Substantively, when the fiscal dependence of a village on the township government increases from 0 to 100% (both of which are the most extreme situations), the likelihoods of Party dominance and concurrent office-holding increase on average from 21% to 28% and from 15% to 41% respectively, while the likelihood of VC dominance or power-sharing decreases from 64% to 32%.

The results suggest that when large-scale land expropriations occur and when more people participate in collective petitions, VCs are more likely to hold substantial power rather than just being subordinate to Party branches. These results confirm Hypotheses 2b and 2c. Substantively, when the size of land acquired exceeded 50 *mu* within the past three years, on average the likelihood of Party branch dominance decreases from 27% to 16%, while the likelihood of VC dominance or power-sharing between Party branches and VCs increases from 42% to 76% and the likelihood of concurrent office-holding decreases from 30% to 8%. When villagers organized collective petitions with more than 50 participants in the past three years, on average of likelihood of Party branch dominance decreases from 29% to 17%, while the likelihood of VC dominance or power-sharing increases from 43% to 63% and the likelihood of concurrent office-holding decreases from 27% to 20%. All these effects are substantial in magnitude.

Among the control variables, the share of migrant workers who work outside the

Table 6: Multinomial logistic regressions explaining village balance of power

	Party Dominance	Concurrent Office-holding	Party Dominance	Concurrent Office-holding	Party Dominance	Concurrent Office-holding	Party Dominance	Concurrent office-holding
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
Size of expropriated land ($\geq$50 *mu*)	-2.543**	-3.865***						
	(1.079)	(1.316)						
Size of expropriated land ($\geq$100 *mu*)			-2.776***	-4.316***				
			(1.066)	(1.228)				
Collective petition ($\geq$50 participants)					-1.676**	-1.637*		
					(0.831)	(0.897)		
Collective petition ($\geq$100 participants)							-1.463*	-1.965**
							(0.883)	(0.973)
Fiscal dependence	2.052*	3.189***	1.942*	3.018***	2.082**	3.167***	1.885**	3.001***
	(1.104)	(1.079)	(1.101)	(1.048)	(0.997)	(0.980)	(0.957)	(0.952)
Quality of elections	0.194	0.715**	0.224	0.773**	0.127	0.573*	0.018	0.483
	(0.311)	(0.363)	(0.321)	(0.362)	(0.301)	(0.323)	(0.304)	(0.331)
Income per capita (log)	0.451	0.795	0.553	0.985*	0.331	0.645	0.410	0.716
	(0.642)	(0.633)	(0.719)	(0.586)	(0.642)	(0.522)	(0.639)	(0.505)
Population (log)	-0.230	-0.526	-0.447	-0.790	-0.192	-0.460	-0.290	-0.555
	(0.441)	(0.604)	(0.446)	(0.617)	(0.453)	(0.562)	(0.436)	(0.573)
Share of migrant workers	4.818**	7.968***	4.974**	8.031***	5.037*	7.377***	4.198*	6.621***
	(2.367)	(2.456)	(2.388)	(2.550)	(2.583)	(2.549)	(2.327)	(2.392)
Ancestral Hall	-0.863	-0.410	-0.636	-0.131	-1.100	-1.005	-0.938	-0.925
	(0.790)	(0.765)	(0.780)	(0.732)	(0.749)	(0.960)	(0.739)	(0.942)
Constant	-1.523	-4.253	-0.981	-4.181	-1.093	-3.673	-0.899	-3.362
	(7.453)	(7.253)	(7.759)	(7.093)	(7.152)	(6.493)	(7.021)	(6.508)
Provincial fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118

Source: 2008 survey.

Note: The baseline category is VC dominance or power-sharing;

Standard errors are in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

village significantly increases the likelihoods of both Party dominance and concurrent office-holding. A possible explanation is that migrant workers who receive their primary income outside have fewer economic stakes within their villages and therefore weaker incentives to act collectively to influence the balance of power within village leadership.

Two caveats about the above results should be pointed out. First, as a robustness check, we also perform a set of logistic regressions, combining Party branch dominance and concurrent office-holding into a single category in the dependent variable. The results are consistent with those in Table 6, thereby providing further evidence for our claim that the two types of power structure are conceptually closer to each other in terms of their implications for village governance. Second, collective petitions may be endogenous to rather than explain the balance of the power. It is possible that local governance contexts, such as benevolent local officials, simultaneously encourage more powerful VCs and reduce collective petitions by villagers. Alternatively, villages where villagers are more assertive and vocal may have more powerful VCs and more petitions at the same time.[17] While both the existing literature and our fieldwork suggest that collective petitions directly challenge the authority of Party branch secretaries (e.g. Sun et al., 2013), thereby shaping the balance of power to favor VC leaders, we acknowledge the limitations of our research and suggest that future research should test these dynamics.

6. Conclusion

This article examines the bindingness of village elections through the lens of land expropriation in rural China. We operationalize bindingness by analyzing the post-election balance of power within village leadership, more specifically the configuration of power between leaders of VCs and Party branches. Empirical analysis based on survey data leads to two major findings. First, when VCs hold substantial power, villagers' interests are better represented during land expropriation, villagers show greater satisfaction with their land-taking compensation, and negotiations between villagers and local governments on land-taking compensation are more likely to take place. Second, the configuration of power between VCs and Party branches can be understood as political bargaining be-

tween local states and ordinary villagers. Whereas local states can rely on their control over fiscal resources to empower Party branches, VCs are more likely to hold substantial power when villagers face land expropriation and organize collective actions to resist local state predation.

Our findings help address the theoretical questions raised at the beginning of this article and have important implications for the scholarship on quasi-democratic institutions under authoritarianism. First, they suggest that binding institutions should not be taken as given in an authoritarian context. Rather, institutional bindingness is often questionable due to the manipulation of authoritarian ruling elites. The effect of quasi-democratic institutions on authoritarian governance is therefore contingent on the degree of institutional bindingness. These findings are by no means unique in China. In Vietnam, for example, local legislators are elected but often "captured" by local state officials (Malesky et al., 2014); as a result, elected legislators serve primarily as an information channel for the regime rather than the interest of their constituencies (Malesky et al., 2012). This research emphasizes the importance of treating institutional bindingness as a theoretical dimension of quasi-democratic institutions in authoritarian regimes.

Second, we also show that citizens, who are generally viewed as powerless in face of the authoritarian state, have the ability to shape institutional bindingness in their favor. Weak or non-binding institutions, whose performance fails to live up to people's expectations, nevertheless offer a rallying point for citizens to challenge the decisions of ruling elites (Distelhorst, 2017). Political activists can build political actions surrounding institutions, sometimes in an coalition with other state or non-state actors, to pressure the regime to make more meaningful policy and political concessions (Mertha, 2009). These actions often take semi-institutionalized (e.g., petitions) or non-institutionalized (e.g., riots) forms, demonstrating what Acemoglu and Robinson (2005) called the "*de facto* power" of citizens and compelling ruling elites to join political bargains with the society. The outcomes of these bargains depend on the ability of citizens to use collective actions to impose credible coercive threats against elites, as well as the capacity of the state to absorb these threats (Lee and Zhang, 2013). These findings support the idea

that institutions are reflective of the underlying power distribution among key political actors rather than exogenously determined (Pepinsky, 2013).

Taken together, our findings suggest that it is insufficient to evaluate different authoritarian regimes based only on the presence (or absence) of quasi-democratic institutions and the quality of their procedures. It is equally, if not more, important to analyze institutional bindingness and its variations both across regimes and across subnational units of the same regime by taking into consideration the contextualized political bargains among relevant political actors. Because of these variations, regimes that are similarly labeled as "institutional authoritarianism" or "competitive authoritarianism" may in fact exhibit vastly different governance patterns.

Notes

[1]Unless otherwise specified, the terms, "local state" and "local government", refer to the party-state apparatus at county(*xian*)/district(*qu*) and township(*xiangzhen*)/street(*jiedao*) levels, which are responsible for the implementation of land expropriation in the majority of cases. It should also be noted that land expropriation is decided and implemented above the village level where competitive direct elections are held. For readers unfamiliar with the administrative structure of China, see Lieberthal (1995), Chapter 6.

[2]One exception is Mattingly (2016), who finds that land taking is more likely to occur when village leadership overlaps with strong informal institutions (lineage groups).

[3]For discussion of the historical background of village elections, see Shi (1999).

[4]Sun et al. (2013) measures village power structure using the survey question, "In your village, how are public affairs tasks divided between the two committees?" (p. 743).

[5]For details of land institutions in rural China, see Liu et al. (2010).

[6]Strictly speaking, land disputes can also arise from other contexts, e.g., reallocation of land within village collectives or occupation of land by village leaders (Whiting, 2011; Deininger and Jin, 2009; Brandt et al., 2004). In this study we focus on land expropriations by the local government only.

[7]Li (2001) and Wang (2012) observe that village leaders can act as leaders of collective action against other unpopular state policies or practices.

[8]It should be noted that the above theorization – treating the two types of village leaders as the agents of local state authorities and ordinary villagers respectively – represents a simplification. In practice, township governments could strengthen their control over elected VC leaders through various legal or illegal channels (e.g., control over salary and bonus, illegal manipulation of elections) (Birney, 2014). To the contrary, village Party leaders can also be accountable to villagers through both informal institutions such as lineage and religious groups (Tsai, 2007; Xu and Yao, 2015) and formal institutions such as introducing public participation in the selection of Party branch leaders (Li, 1999). Nevertheless, the principal-agent framework captures the main difference between VCs

and Party branches and has proved to be a useful analytical framework (Sun et al., 2013).

[9]Interview with a VC chair in Jilin province, June 2008.

[10]Interview with villagers in Yueqing, Wenzhou in Zhejiang province, June 2014.

[11]We combine concurrent office-holding, or *yijiantiao*, with Party branch dominance because the most common practice of implementing *yijiantiao* is to let Party branch secretaries participate in VC elections and win the elections to become VC chairs. This means that VC candidates need to be Party members in the first place, thereby reducing the pool of eligible candidates. Our interviews suggest that to ensure the implementation of *yijiantiao*, local governments often intervene in the nomination of VC candidates and hold elections only as a legitimizing process (see also Liu and Hou, 2015). Moreover, regardless of how they are selected, Party branch secretaries as concurrent office-holders are still subordinate to the centralized Party hierarchy. See O'Brien and Han (2009) for further discussion.

[12]The answer "Don't Know (DK)" was provided in the survey. The DK answers were dropped in our analysis.

[13]We combined those who chose 2 and those who chose 3 because the former situation is relatively rare, only accounting for 9% of all responses. Appendix D provides more details about construction of the main variables of interest.

[14]The size of the expropriated land is measured dichotomously. It is coded as 1 if the expropriated land size is greater than two *mu* and 0 otherwise. The average size of expropriated land among households that had experienced land expropriation is 2.2 *mu*.

[15]Lu (2014) finds that patterns of rural-urban migration have an impact on both the type and the quality of village governance.

[16]Existing studies suggest that informal institutions (such as lineage groups) have important impacts on village governance (Tsai, 2007; Xu and Yao, 2015; Su et al., 2011; Mattingly, 2016).

[17]We are grateful to one reviewer for pointing out these possible mechanisms.

References

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2005). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Alpermann, B. (2009). Institutionalizing village governance in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(60), 397–409.

Besley, T., & Burgess, R. (2002). The political economy of government responsiveness: Theory and evidence from India. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(4), 1415–1451.

Birney, M. (2014). Decentralization and veiled corruption under China's "rule of mandates". *World Development*, 53, 55–67.

Blaydes, L. (2010). *Elections and distributive politics in Mubarak's Egypt.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Boix, C. (2003). *Democracy and redistribution.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Boix, C., & Svolik, M. W. (2013). The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships. *Journal of Politics*, 75(2), 300–316.

Brandt, L., & Turner, M. A. (2007). The usefulness of imperfect elections: The case of village elections in rural China. *Economics & Politics*, 19(3),453–480.

Brandt, L., Rozelle, S., & Turner, M. A. (2004). Local government behavior and property right formation in rural China. *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 160(4), 627–662.

Brooker, P. (2014). *Non-democratic regimes.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cai, M. (2016). Land for welfare in China. *Land Use Policy*, 55, 1–12.

Cai, Y. (2003). Collective ownership or cadres' ownership? The non-agricultural use of farmland in China. *The China Quarterly*, 175(3), 662–680.

Collier, D., & Levitsky, S. (1997). Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in comparative research. *World Politics*, 49(3), 430–451.

Cui, E., Tao, R., Warner, T. J., & Yang, D. L. (2015). How do land takings affect political trust in rural China? *Political Studies*, 63(1), 91–109.

Deininger, K., & Jin, S. (2009). Securing property rights in transition: Lessons from implementation of China's rural land contracting law. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 70(1), 22–38.

Diamond, L. J. (2002). Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), 21–35.

Diamond, L. J., Linz, J. J., & Lipset, S. M. (eds.). (1995). *Politics in developing countries: Comparing experiences with democracy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Distelhorst, G. (2017). The power of empty promises: Quasi-democratic institutions and activism in China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(4), 464–498.

Fu, Y. (2014). Cun ganbu de sanchong juese ji zhengce sikao: jiyu zhengdi buchang de kaocha [Triple roles of village cadres and their policy implications: Based on an Investigation of Land Expropriation Compensation]. *Qinghua Daxue Xuebao (Zhexue Shehui Kexue) [Journal of Tsinghua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)]*, 29(3), 154–163.

Gandhi, J. (2008). *Political institutions under dictatorship*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gandhi, J., & Przeworski, A. (2007). Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(11), 1279–1301.

Gehlbach, S., & Keefer, P. (2011). Investment without democracy: Ruling-party institutionalization and credible commitment in autocracies. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 39(2), 123–139.

Guo, Z., & Bernstein, T. P. (2004). The impact of elections on the village structure of power: The relations between the village committees and the party branches. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 13(39), 257–275.

Han, J. (2005). Shidi nongmin de jiuye he shehui baozhang [the employment and social security of land-losing farmers]. *Zhongguo jingji shibao (China Economic Times)*. `http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/40557/49139/49143/3494533.html` Accessed April 15, 2017.

Harding, R. (2015). Attribution and accountability: Voting for roads in Ghana. *World Politics*, 67(4), 656–689.

Heurlin, C. (2016). *Responsive authoritarianism in China: Land, protests, and policy making*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ho, P. (2001). Who owns China's land? Policies, property rights and deliberate institutional ambiguity. *The China Quarterly*, 166, 394–421.

Hsing, Y. (2010). *The great urban transformation: Politics of land and property in China*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jensen, N. M., Malesky, E., & Weymouth, S. (2014). Unbundling the relationship between authoritarian legislatures and political risk. *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(3), 655–684.

Kennedy, J. J., Rozelle, S., & Shi, Y. (2004). Elected leaders and collective land: Farmers' evaluation of village leaders' performance in rural China. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 9(1), 1–22.

Lee, C., & Zhang, Y. (2013). The power of instability: Unraveling the microfoundations of bargained authoritarianism in China. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(6), 1475–1508.

Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2002). The rise of competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of democracy*, 13(2), 51–65.

Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2010). *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Li, L. (1999). The two-ballot system in Shanxi province: Subjecting village party secretaries to a popular vote. *The China Journal*, 42, 103–118.

Li, L. (2001). Elections and popular resistance in rural China. *China Information*, 15(2), 1–19.

Lieberthal, K. *Governing China: From revolution through reform*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Liu, S., Jiang, X., & Li, Q.(2010). *Zhongguo tudi zhengce gaige: Zhengce yanjin he difang shishi [Land policy reform in China: Policy evolution and local implementation]*. Shanghai: Sanlian chubanshe.

Liu, Y., & Hou, G.(2015). Cun dangzhibu shuji, cunweihui zhuren 'yijiantiao' yunxing jizhi de diaocha he sikao [An investigation of and reflection over the mechanism of concurrent village office holding]. *People's Daily*. `http://dangjian.people.com.cn/n/2015/0731/c117092-27392310.html` Accessed May 3, 2017.

Lu, J. (2014). *Varieties of governance in China: migration and institutional change in Chinese villages*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Luo, R., Zhang, L., Huang, J., & Rozelle, S. (2007). Elections, fiscal reform and public goods provision in rural China. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 35(3), 583–611.

Lust-Okar, E. (2005). *Structuring conflict in the Arab world: Incumbents, opponents, and institutions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Magaloni, B. (2006). *Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Malesky, E., & Schuler, P. (2010). Nodding or needling: Analyzing delegate responsiveness in an authoritarian parliament. *American Political Science Review*, 104(3), 482–502.

Malesky, E., Schuler, P., & Tran, A. (2012). The adverse effects of sunshine: A field experiment on legislative transparency in an authoritarian assembly. *American Political Science Review*, 106(4), 762–786.

Malesky, E., Nguyen, C. V., & Tran, A. (2014). The impact of recentralization on public services: A difference-in-differences analysis of the abolition of elected councils in Vietnam. *American Political Science Review*, 108(1), 144–168.

Manion, M. (1996). The electoral connection in the Chinese countryside. *American Political Science Review*, 90(4), 736–748.

Manion, M. (2006). Democracy, community, trust the impact of elections in rural China. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(3), 301–324.

Manion, M. (2009). How to assess village elections in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(60), 379–383.

Manion, M. (2014). Authoritarian parochialism: Local congressional representation in China. *The China Quarterly*, 218, 311–338.

Manion, M. (2016). *Information for autocrats: Representation in Chinese local congresses*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Martinez-Bravo, M., Padró i Miquel, G., Qian, N., & Yao, Y. (2011). Do local elections in non-democracies increase accountability? Evidence from rural China. NBER working paper No. 16948. `http://www.nber.org/papers/w16948`

Mattingly, D. C. (2016). Elite capture: How decentralization and informal institutions weaken property rights in China. *World Politics*, 68(3), 383–412.

Mertha, A. (2009). "Fragmented authoritarianism 2.0": Political pluralization in the Chinese policy process. *The China Quarterly*, 200, 995–1012.

O'Brien, K. J., & Han, R. (2009). Path to democracy? Assessing village elections in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18(60), 359–378.

O'Brien, K. J., & Li, L. 2006. *Rightful resistance in rural China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oi, J. C., & Rozelle, S. (2000). Elections and power: The locus of decision-making in Chinese villages. *The China Quarterly*, 162, 513–539.

Olken, B. A. (2010). Direct democracy and local public goods: Evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia. *American Political Science Review*, 104(2), 243–267.

Ong, L. H. (2014). State-led urbanization in China: Skyscrapers, land revenue and "concentrated villages". *The China Quarterly*, 217, 162–179.

Pastor, R. A., & Tan, Q. (2000). The meaning of China's village elections. *The China Quarterly*, 162, 490–512.

Pepinsky, T. (2013). The institutional turn in comparative authoritarianism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 44(3), 631–653.

Rithmire, M. (2015). *Land bargains and Chinese capitalism: The politics of property rights under reform*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rosenzweig, S. C. (2015). Does electoral competition affect public goods provision in dominant-party regimes? Evidence from Tanzania. *Electoral Studies*, 39, 72 – 84.

Sargeson, S. (2013). Violence as development: Land expropriation and China's urbanization. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 40(6), 1063–1085.

Sargeson, S. (2016). Grounds for self-government? Changes in land ownership and democratic participation in Chinese communities. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. DOI:10.1080/03066150.2016.1197909.

Shen, Y., & Yao, Y. (2008). Does grassroots democracy reduce income inequality in China? *Journal of Public Economics*, 92(10), 2182–2198.

Shi, T. (1999). Village committee elections in China: Institutionalist tactics for democracy. *World Politics*, 51(3), 385–412.

Simpser, A. (2013). *Why governments and parties manipulate elections: Theory, practice, and implications*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

State of the field: Assessing village elections in China. (2009). *Journal of Contemporary China*, Special issue, 18(60): 359–420.

Su, F., Tao, R., Sun, X., & Liu, M. (2011). Clans, electoral procedures and voter turnout: Evidence from villagers' committee elections in transitional China. *Political Studies*, 59(2), 432–457.

Sun, X., Warner, T. J., Yang, D. L., & Liu, M. (2013). Patterns of authority and governance in rural China: Who's in charge? why? *Journal of Contemporary China*, 22(83), 733–754.

Truex, R. (2016). *Making autocracy work: Representation and responsiveness in modern China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tsai, L. L. (2007). *Accountability without democracy: Solidary groups and public goods provision in rural China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wang, H. (2013). *Zhongguo zhengdi zhidu gaige: Lilun, shishi yu zhengce zuhe [Land requisition system reform in China: Theories, facts and policy portfolios]*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press.

Wang, J. (2012). Shifting boundaries between the state and society: Village cadres as new activists in collective petition. *The China Quarterly*, 211, 697–717.

Wang, S., & Yao, Y. (2007). Grassroots democracy and local governance: Evidence from rural China. *World Development*, 35(10), 1635–1649.

Whiting, S. (2011). Values in land: Fiscal pressures, land disputes and justice claims in rural and peri-urban China. *Urban Studies*, 48(3), 569–587.

Wilson, M. C., & Wright, J. (2017). Autocratic legislatures and expropriation risk. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 1–17.

Wright, J. (2008). Do authoritarian institutions constrain? How legislatures affect economic growth and investment. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2), 322–343.

Xu, Y., & Yao, Y. (2015). Informal institutions, collective action, and public investment in rural China. *American Political Science Review*, 109(2), 371–391.

Yu, J. (2009). Dangqian woguo quntixing shijian de zhuyao leixing he jiben tezheng [Major types and basic characteristics of group events in today's China]. *Zhongguo Zhengfa Daxue Xuebao [Journal of China University of Political Science and Law]*, 6, 114–120.

Zhang, X., Fan, S., Zhang, L., & Huang, J. (2004). Local governance and public goods provision in rural China. *Journal of Public Economics*, 88(12), 2857–2871.

A. Data Appendix

(a) *Twelve-city survey in 2009*

The 2009 survey was conducted in the urban peripheries of 12 cities and in villages that had experienced land expropriation since 2004. We chose the cities from four major regions of the country: the Yangtze River Delta (Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces); the Pearl River Delta (Guangdong Province); the Chengdu-Chongqing region (Sichuan Province and Chongqing Municipality); and the Bohai Bay Area (Hebei and Shandong Province). These four regions all experienced rapid urbanization in the last two decades; as a result, land expropriation was rather prevalent and land-related tensions were rather acute in these regions (Cui et al., 2015). Among all the cities — including directly administrated cities, prefecture-level cities and county-level cities — within each region, the survey selected three sample cities with different sizes of population, including one megalopolis, one large city, and one medium- or small-size city. The 12 selected cities include Ningbo and Yueqing in Zhejiang Province; Wuxi in Jiangsu Province; Sanhe in Hebei Province; Jinan and Weifang in Shandong Province; Guangzhou, Zhongshan, and Dongguan in Guangdong Province; Nanchong, and Chengdu in Sichuan Province, and Chongqing.

In each city, the survey selected five to six villages from the city's urban peripheries, such as urban districts (*shiqu*) in the case of directly administrated and prefecture-level cities and townships (*zhen*) or streets (*jiedao*) in the case of county-level cities. This resulted in a total of 62 sample villages. In larger cities, the survey focused on a single urban district, while in smaller cities the sampling frame included all urban districts or townships/streets to generate a sufficient number of sample villages. Finally, in each sample village, the survey randomly selected about 20 households in which at least one adult member was available for interviews. After excluding invalid samples, the final dataset yields a total of 1,209 households.

The survey collected information on respondents and their family members' demography, employment, party membership, cadre status, perceptions about various aspects of

village politics, and most importantly, their experiences of land expropriations, compensations they received, and their subjective evaluations about the processes and outcomes of these land expropriations. In cases where the respondent's household experienced land expropriation more than once, the survey asked the respondent to choose answers based on the experience of the expropriation that had the largest impact on the household. Among the 1,209 samples, 756 have experienced land expropriation since 2000 and 445 have had such experiences since 2005 (the earliest year for which our survey recorded the configuration of power in the sample villages).

(b) *Six-province survey in 2008*

The 2008 survey was conducted in 120 villages in six provinces. The survey first divided the country into six major geographical regions and randomly selected one province from each region: Fujian, Hebei, Jiangsu, Jilin, Shaanxi and Sichuan were the sample provinces. Below the provincial level, the survey adopted a multi-stage random sampling approach. First, all counties of each sample province were ranked by their industrial output value, and five sample counties were drawn using the systematic sampling method. Then two townships were randomly selected from each county and two villages from each township. In each village, around 20 households were randomly selected from the official household registration list provided by the village accountant. One household member was randomly selected from each sample household. Survey enumerators were sent to respondents' home to conduct face-to-face interviews and fill out the standardized questionnaire. Most importantly to this study, interviews with individual villagers allow us to collect information about collective petitions that occurred in the villages.

The survey also conducted interviews with village leaders and other "elite villagers" (villagers who are active participants of village affairs and thus familiar with the situation of their villages, such as senior villagers, electoral committee members, and/or candidates of elections) to collect village-level socioeconomic information, electoral procedures and the configuration of power between VCs and Party branches. Therefore, compared with the 2009 survey, the 2008 survey collected richer data at the village level. More specif-

ically, the survey team interviewed one village leader, such as Party secretary, the VC chair, or the village accountant, in each village to gather basic village socioeconomic information, such as population, average income level, and share of migrant workers. The team also interviewed a group of three "elite villagers" in a separate interview. They were asked to collectively recall the procedures of their village elections as well as the power structure within the village leadership.

B. Robustness checks for the effects of the balance of power

This section considers three robustness checks for the effects of village power structure on the processes and outcomes of land expropriations, using alternative model specifications. Table 7 reports the results of ordered logistic regressions, taking into consideration the fact that both dependent variables are discrete. Table 8 reports the results of hierarchical models that controls for village-level random effects. Table 9 reports the results of bivariate regressions that exclude all control variables. As these results show, the main results remain hold.

C. An instrumental-variable approach

We adopt an instrumental-variable approach to address the potential endogeneity concerns. Our approach takes advantage of the local policy context of China where provincial- and city-level regulations shape the balance of power of all villages within the same city. More specifically, we find that provincial- or city-level governments often issue documents to regulate the balance of power between VCs and village Party branches within their jurisdictions. For example, in Jilin we found that the provincial Party committee explicitly encouraged concurrent office-holding by issuing administrative documents "suggesting" that 70 per cent of its villages should adopt concurrent office-holding. Consequently, concurrent office-holding is more prevalent in Jilin than elsewhere. In several prefectures in Jiangsu, we found government documents emphasizing the importance of preserving the Party's leadership in village affairs. As a result, Party branches are more likely to hold a dominant authority in most villages of these prefectures. These regulations from

Table 7: Explaining the outcome of land expropriation (ordered-logit)

	Satisfaction (1)	Satisfaction (2)	Interests (3)	Interests (4)
Balance of power (Measure 1)	2.592***		2.354**	
	(0.892)		(0.920)	
Balance of power (Measure 2)		0.738***		0.330
		(0.233)		(0.236)
Cadre	0.517	0.555	0.446	0.480
	(0.396)	(0.395)	(0.409)	(0.411)
Party membership	0.048	0.035	-0.054	-0.077
	(0.212)	(0.212)	(0.220)	(0.219)
Major clan	0.417*	0.446**	0.124	0.156
	(0.226)	(0.225)	(0.234)	(0.233)
Household size	-0.097	-0.095	0.043	0.045
	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.079)	(0.079)
Non-agricultural employment	0.306	0.300	0.311	0.310
	(0.221)	(0.221)	(0.230)	(0.231)
Size of expropriated land	-0.556***	-0.545**	0.026	0.008
	(0.212)	(0.212)	(0.220)	(0.220)
Demolition	0.733***	0.836***	0.239	0.344
	(0.282)	(0.280)	(0.304)	(0.300)
2006	-0.042	-0.065	-0.264	-0.271
	(0.283)	(0.284)	(0.291)	(0.292)
2007	-0.214	-0.353	-0.107	-0.193
	(0.296)	(0.297)	(0.323)	(0.323)
2008	-0.255	-0.201	-0.482	-0.420
	(0.314)	(0.313)	(0.318)	(0.316)
Cut-off point 1	0.985	-0.929	0.022	-2.010***
	(1.094)	(0.684)	(1.155)	(0.746)
Cut-off point 2	2.548**	0.637	1.197	-0.841
	(1.097)	(0.680)	(1.151)	(0.733)
Cut-off point 3	3.334***	1.424**	2.251*	0.204
	(1.103)	(0.684)	(1.155)	(0.733)
Cut-off point 4	5.566***	3.659***	4.365***	2.298***
	(1.127)	(0.705)	(1.172)	(0.742)
N. of cases	421	421	394	394
City fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: 2009 survey.

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 8: Explaining the outcome of land expropriations (hierarchal OLS model)

	Satisfaction (1)	Satisfaction (2)	Interests (3)	Interests (4)
Balance of power (Measure 1)	0.902*		1.118***	
	(0.541)		(0.373)	
Balance of power (Measure 2)		0.450**		0.316***
		(0.175)		(0.120)
Cadre	0.300	0.303	0.435*	0.444*
	(0.212)	(0.212)	(0.229)	(0.229)
Party membership	0.073	0.070	0.055	0.047
	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.127)	(0.127)
Major clan	0.278**	0.285**	0.101	0.102
	(0.126)	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.125)
Household size	-0.053	-0.055	0.009	0.005
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.043)	(0.044)
Non-agricultural employment	0.162	0.156	0.144	0.151
	(0.122)	(0.122)	(0.126)	(0.126)
Size of expropriated land	-0.305**	-0.301**	-0.010	0.011
	(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.124)	(0.124)
Demolition	0.617***	0.627***	0.560***	0.507***
	(0.163)	(0.156)	(0.129)	(0.126)
2006	-0.042	-0.057	-0.302*	-0.305*
	(0.161)	(0.161)	(0.160)	(0.161)
2007	-0.130	-0.185	-0.191	-0.258
	(0.181)	(0.181)	(0.169)	(0.173)
2008	-0.045	-0.035	-0.048	-0.053
	(0.205)	(0.202)	(0.173)	(0.174)
Constant	2.479***	2.767***	2.578***	3.109***
	(0.401)	(0.250)	(0.309)	(0.225)
N. of cases	421	421	394	394

Source: The 2009 survey.

Note: Robust standard errors are in parentheses; the model controls for random effects at the village level; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 9: Explaining the process and outcome of land expropriation (without controls)

	Satisfaction		Interests		Negotiation	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	Logit	Logit
Balance of power (Measure 1)	2.064***		1.410***		0.653**	
	(0.562)		(0.515)		(0.255)	
Balance of power (Measure 2)		0.543***		0.241*		0.128*
		(0.143)		(0.124)		(0.066)
Constant	0.467	2.025***	2.132***	3.319***		
	(0.672)	(0.391)	(0.643)	(0.397)		
R-squared	0.221	0.221	0.176	0.167		
N. of cases	421	421	394	394	432	432
City fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Source: 2009 survey.
Note: Marginal effects are reported for Logit regressions; robust standard errors are in parentheses for OLS regressions; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

provincial and city governments constitute an exogenous factor that shapes the balance of power of all villages within the same city. Therefore, they can serve as an instrumental variable for the village power balance.

We do not have systematic data on how the balance of power within the village leadership is regulated in each city. In response, we construct a proxy for the regulatory environment of our sample cities regarding the balance of power. More specifically, we use the average score of the balance of power among all sample villages within the same city as the instrument for the main independent variable — balance of power. In other words, the value of the instrument for each sample village is the average score of the balance of power of all villages within the same city.

Two caveats should be noted about the instrumental variable approach. First, we have two measures for the balance of power. We use Measure 1 in constructing our instrument because in comparison with Measure 2, Measure 1 is more accurately measured and has fewer measurement errors. The second caveat is that because the instrument is a constant within the same city, we replace city-level fixed effects with regional-level fixed effects (i.e., Yangtze River Delta Area, Pearl River Delta Area, Chengdu-Chongqing Area, and Bohai Bay Area).

We use the 2SLS method for the first two regressions where satisfaction and interest

Table 10: Explaining the outcome of land expropriation (instrumental-variable approach)

	Satisfaction 2SLS	Interest 2SLS	Negotiation IV-probit
Balance of power (Measure 1)	1.398**	1.458**	0.672**
	(0.712)	(0.741)	(0.303)
Cadre	0.296	0.386*	0.161
	(0.227)	(0.226)	(0.109)
Party membership	0.032	0.057	(0.046)
	(0.126)	(0.126)	(0.057)
Major clan	0.307**	0.163	-0.017
	(0.128)	(0.127)	(0.058)
Household size	-0.067	0.025	0.034*
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.020)
Non-agricultural employment	0.239*	0.154	-0.076
	(0.127)	(0.129)	(0.057)
Size of expropriated land	-0.282**	0.042	-0.049
	(0.126)	(0.126)	(0.056)
Demolition	0.722***	0.468***	0.289***
	(0.145)	(0.147)	(0.064)
2006	-0.220	-0.303*	0.009
	(0.162)	(0.160)	(0.073)
2007	-0.258	-0.208	-0.103
	(0.177)	(0.175)	(0.076)
2008	0.003	-0.081	0.074
	(0.192)	(0.187)	(0.086)
Constant	2.022***	2.497***	
	(0.499)	(0.525)	
N. of cases	421	394	432
Regional fixed effects	YES	YES	YES

Source: 2009 survey.
Note: The instrumental variable is significant at the 1% level in the first stage of all three regressions; Columns (1)-(2) report robust standard errors for 2SLS regressions; Columns (3) reports the marginal effects and their standard errors for the IV-probit regression; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

are the dependent variables, respectively, and use the IV-probit method to estimate the third regression where the dependent variable negotiation is binary. We report the results in Table 10. The instrumental variable is significant at the 1% level in the first stage of all three regressions. The results are consistent with the results shown in Table 4.

D. Definition and construction of the main variables

Table 11: Definition and construction of the main variables

Variable	Definition	Measurement
Balance of power – Measure 1	The balance of power between Party branches and Village Committees initially measured at the individual level and then aggregated into the village level	(1) Measured by the survey question, "Who is/was in charge of public affairs in your village?" Answers coded as follows. 1=Party branch assumes the dominant leadership role; 2=VC assumes the dominant leadership role; 3=Party branch and VC share the leadership responsibilities (2) Aggregated individual-level responses into a village-level measure by taking the ratio of respondents from the full sample who reported VC taking the leadership role either solely or shared with Party branches in a village (i.e., $ratio = \frac{those\ who\ answered\ 2\ or\ 3\ to\ the\ question}{all\ land-losing\ villagers}$)
Balance of power – Measure 2	Same as Measure 1	Converted the ratio into a dichotomous measure (i.e., coded as 1 if the ratio above is greater than or equal to 0.5 and 0 otherwise)
Satisfaction	The extent to which villagers were satisfied with the land-taking compensation they received	Measured by the survey question, "How satisfied were you with the compensation and settlement arrangements that your household received in land expropriation?" Answers coded on a five-level scale (5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3=neutral; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree)
Interest	The extent to which village leaders stand for the interest of villagers during land expropriation	Measured by the survey question, "How much do you agree that village leaders stood for the interest of villagers in land expropriation?" Answers coded on a five-level scale (5=very satisfied; 4=satisfied; 3=neutral; 2=dissatisfied; 1=very dissatisfied)
Negotiation	Whether villagers held a negotiation with the local government for more compensation	Measured by the survey question, "Was there a negotiation on land-taking compensation with the local government when your land was expropriated?" Answers coded dichotomously (1=yes)
Configuration of power	The configuration of power between Party branches and Village Committees measured at the village level	(1) Measured by the survey question, "Who assumes the primary leadership role in village financial affairs in your village?" Answers coded as follows. 1= Party branch secretary assumes the dominant leadership role; 2= VC chair assumes the dominant leadership role; 3= VC chair and Party branch secretary share leadership responsibilities (power-sharing); 4= Concurrent office-holding (2) Converted 4-categorical responses into 3-categorical measure by combining those who answered 2 and 3 into one category